Volume II.
Number 12.

Week of
June 9, 1941

Critics'

THEATRE REVIEWS

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†**"Snookie" opened Tuesday, June 3rd, at the John Golden Theatre.*

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NEW YORK POST
NEW YORK HERALD TRIBUNE
NEW YORK NEWSPAPER "PM"
NEW YORK TIMES
NEW YORK DAILY NEWS
NEW YORK WORLD-TELEGRAM
NEW YORK JOURNAL AND AMERICAN

Place this week's reviews with preceding weekly reviews so as to have always an up to date file of the New York Stage.

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"Snookie"

Reprinted from NEW YORK JOURNAL AND AMERICAN, *June 4, 1941*

'Snookie' Presented at Golden Theatre

William Harrigan, Florenz Ames and Others Appear in Farce About the Boys Who Draw Comic Strips

By JOHN ANDERSON

SINCE the theatre season is officially closed and the shutters drawn, the little item called "Snookie," which opened at the Golden last night, can be swept back under the carpet, safe, I imagine, even from desperate moths.

This is a farce about the boys who draw comic strips, written by Thomas A. Johnstone and presented, according to advance reports, by the Messrs. Hellza Olsen and Poppin Johnson, as mad a pair as ever escaped from the funny papers. But the identity of the producer is not disclosed in the playbill, suggesting that the MM. Olson and Johnson feared the play was not quite up to the aesthetic and literary standard of their Winter Garden goofycoop, and so withheld their patrician imprimatur.

As a matter of fact, Mr. Johnstone's play might be a tiny fragment cast off by "Hellzapoppin," enlarged, demobilized, and dirtied up a bit. If it had the usual Olsen and Johnson arsenal to drown out its talk, a clown trying to deliver an ever-growing rubber plant to someone lost in the audience, and that leather-lunged matron screaming for "Oscar" up and down the aisles it might seem almost sensible. But as it is I could distinctly hear its dialogue creeping in one ear and out the other.

Cutting Capers

For three acts this dialogue had to do with a group of zany comic artists cutting capers and cartoons on a paper supposed to resemble, but roughly, the old New York World. There the boys play pranks on one another, engage in a permanent feud with Quigley, the editor who desn't like comic strips, and who proposes to throw them all out if he can keep control of the paper. The only thing that can upset his scheme is for somebody in Ashtabula to have a baby by a certain date to inherit the newspaper property.

You may be interested, though I cannot imagine why, to learn at this point that the play used to be called "Test Tube Baby" and "Whose Baby Are You?" The comic artists rig up a plot against Quigley, and after a clutter of miscellaneous episodes, including some songs, dances, and a peculiar scene with most of the boys in fancy dress costume, everything winds up to the complete satisfaction of everyone, it seemed except the audience.

The struggling young artist got the girl, a fat contract, and $10,000 for an operation which the author leered at all evening, but which turned out to be an innocent blood transfusion. Quigley relented and loved the comic strips, a taxi driver dressed up in bull fighter clothes got paid a bill for $142.

It is true that in all this happy-ending settlement I only got the same hat I had previously put under my seat, but it was never more welcome.

Such reliable actors as William Harrigan, Florenz Ames, Eddie and J. C. Nugent are mixed up in it, together with young Lawrence Weber, and that furious-mustachioed Mr. Angi O. Poulos, who flung a lawn mower about so delightfully in one of Mr. Saroyan's plays.

While "Snookie" hasn't a lawn the Broadway grass is growing, I imagine, under its fallen arches.

Reprinted from NEW YORK POST, *June 4, 1941*

"Snookie" Shows Comic Strip Artists at "Work"

By WILELLA WALDORF

OLSEN and Johnson are in Hollywood, but their memory lingers on. Happy Feldman and Jay C. Flippen have taken over their frenzied chores in "Hellzapoppin" at the Winter Garden. And last night Olsen and Johnson, non-resident producers, brought into the John Golden Theatre a madcap farce by Thomas A. Johnstone entitled "Snookie." It is laid entirely in the Art Department of a newspaper described as the New York Press, where the staff does almost everything except work.

All of the ace comic strip artists are in Florida, Hawaii or Hollywood. Only Balmy, Tommy, Jerry and the rest of the "ghosts" are left to get out the paper. They spend most of their time singing, dancing, playing the piano, organizing a jazz band, using telescopes and spy glasses on offices across the street, and playing cards and practical jokes on everybody from Quigley, the managing editor, to a green youth from Ashtabula, Ohio. At one point several office hangers-on come in dressed as Spanish generals, toreadors, and cowboys, explaining they had stayed late at the Illustrators' Ball, and it is considered a great lark for Balmy and Tommy to put on false faces when called on the carpet by Quigley.

Mr. Johnstone, whose brainstorm this is, happens to be a cartoonist himself, and perhaps he knows, or knew, a newspaper with an Art Department like that on the New York Press. To a reviewer on the Post, accustomed to the quiet elegance of the sanctum presided over by Mr. Mac Govern, it must be admitted "Snookie" comes as something of a shock. Far from carrying on with piano and trumpets, our Post artists are not even permitted a harmonica.

"Snookie," however, is a madcap farce, with singing and dancing tossed in whenever the author's invention begins to flag. When the chorus is over, back he comes with another load of foolishness. The plot is terribly complicated and probably it is enough to state simply that it has to do with the birth of a test-tube baby, and the evolution at the same time of a comic strip about a tot named Snookie. The whole idea can be, and is, worked to a frazzle.

A cast of good actors plays it all at top speed and is pretty well winded at the final curtain. Mr. Friedlander, the director, has tossed in every gag he could remember or invent to keep things moving, and there are quite a few laughs to make up for the general idiocy of the idea. The songs concocted by Mr. Friedlander and Mr. Johnstone between them are modestly described in the program as jingles, and are just as modestly put over by John McCauley and Betty Jane Smith, casually assisted by other members of the troupe when they feel in the mood.

June is here and "Snookie" probably doesn't pretend to be anything more devastating than a summer laugh show. They aren't charging too much for it, and it will probably throw hot weather audiences into convulsions.

Reprinted from
NEW YORK HERALD TRIBUNE
June 4, 1941

'Snookie'

Farce With Music Presented at Golden Theater

THERE isn't much to be said for "Snookie," the farce with music which came into the Golden Theater last night under the colors of Ole Olsen and Chic Johnson, except that, despite stiff competition this season, it takes all prizes for low and unfunny comedy. The Broadway seers will tell you that there is room for a good farce on Broadway at this point, but "Snookie" does not fill the bill.

It tells the story of the ghost artists in the comic-strip department of a metropolitan newspaper who manage to be unbelievably dull while engaging in what passes for gay deviltry in "Snookie." In this work Thomas A. Johnstone, the author, would like the public to believe that the ghost artists do no work whatever. They pass their time playing hearts, composing songs and peeping at girls in the buildings across the street. As if these impossible goings-on were not enough, the author has contrived to drag in song and dance routines, which are executed prettily enough by Betty Jane Smith. All this happens in a metropolitan newspaper office, of all places.

This comic exaggeration could easily be forgiven if the farce were as hilarious as the author intended it should be. Before "Snookie" fairly gets started, it falls on its face. Not that everybody isn't trying. The setting is realistic enough, reminding one of a newspaper office down in the City Hall section. The false note there, however, is the uncouth barroom murals. Such farceurs as Florenz Ames and Eddie Nugent are lost in the shuffle of "Snookie." J. C. Nugent and Angi O. Poulos, the funny Greek handy-man of "Love's Old Sweet Song," are evidently at home anywhere and get a few genuine laughs from a script that otherwise needs a thorough fumigating. (J. P.)

"Snookie"

Reprinted from NEW YORK SUN, *June 4, 1941*

'Snookie,' a Minor Nightmare Opens at the John Golden Theater

By RICHARD LOCKRIDGE

THE theater, which has been dozing gently for some weeks, woke up last evening and found itself in convulsions. The Messrs. Olsen and Johnson, exponents of the anything-for-a-laugh technic, are responsible for this misfortune, which is named "Snookie" and opened at the John Golden Theater. "Snookie" provides virtually everything but the laugh.

It is frantically about the denizens of a mythical newspaper art department, all of whom are comical beyond bearing. They drum on wastebaskets and torment a piano. They are visited by a tap dancer on a kiddy car. They wear false faces when the managing editor enters and indulge endlessly in what are sometimes called "running gags." They bang in and out of doors and fill the theater with sound and fury. They are entangled in a plot about what is, with a kind of leering delicacy, called a "test-tube baby." There is also a hick cartoonist who, as the noise finally subsides, is rewarded with a handsome contract for a comic strip.

People who go to the theater in early June are very anxious to be amused, and during the early scenes of "Snookie" some of them managed a kind of hollow laughter. But by the time it needed the stunned silence out front was so deep one could hear a joke drop.

'SNOOKIE'

A farce in three acts by Thomas A. Johnstone; staged by William B. Friedlander; setting by Frederick Fox; presented at the John Golden Theater on June 3, 1941, by Olsen and Johnson. The cast:

Balmy	John McCauley
Tommy	Eddie Nugent
Jerry	Roy Johnson
Home James	Daniele Porise
El Gallo	Angi O. Poulos
Sue	Julie Stevens
Quigley	William Harrigan
Quincy	John Hetherington
Old Bill	Florenz Ames
Gallup	John Kirk
Stupid Stella	Betty Jane Smith
Jim Jones	Lawrence Weber
Sam Tucker	Jack Hartley
Ten Percent	Lou Lubin
Mr. West	J. C. Nugent

If "Snookie" technically belongs to the season of 1940-1941, it is one of that season's very worst exhibits. If, on the other hand, it raises the curtain on the season of 1941-1942 this department can only shudder in anticipation. "Snookie" was written by Thomas A. Johnstone and a number of actors—names elsewhere — bravely shouted themselves hoarse. Mr. Olsen and Mr. Johnson remained in California and nobody can say they weren't wise.

Reprinted from NEW YORK DAILY NEWS, *June 4, 1941*

'Snookie' a Farce About Artists and Synthetic Babies

"Snookie," farce by Thomas A. Johnstone. Produced at the John Golden Theatre, New York, June 3, 1941.

★ ★

By BURNS MANTLE

"SNOOKIE" at the John Golden Theatre is a Tom Johnstone farce about a comic strip apprentice who is suspected of being a test tube father. That should give you some idea.

It was produced at the John Golden Theatre last night with the aid of money and gags contributed by the "Hellzapoppin" boys, the Messrs. Olsen and Johnson, who are at the moment supplied with both. At least that's the tale as it has been told to many.

It is, I think, a pretty sad farce, but the spirit of it is in the comic strip tradition, being full of whams, bams, wows and phooeys.

Whether or not young Tom got his idea of life in the quarters of the strip wheeze boys from his brother William J., who draws those comic taxpayers and other protesting citizens for the World-Telegram, I would not know.

But the idea itself is fairly riotous. The characters are mostly ghost artists. They are the lads who are supposed to do the actual work of drawing the funnies from ideas supplied by their creators, who have all grown rich and indolent.

Jazzy Ghosts

They do little, if any, drawing in the play, devoting their time to playing jazz, hearts and the pursuit of a test tube baby heir who shall inherit the Press and save their jobs.

Occasionally Mr. Johnstone, who is naturally musical, stops to write a song. Usually the song is sung by or for Betty Jane Smith, a tap dancer, who wanders in with an alibi, probably from Ned Wayburn's studio next door. "Rock and Rye for Baby" is the first of the songs.

The cast includes comedian actors like John McCauley, Eddie Nugent, Roy Johnson and Julie Stevens and character comics like Florenz Ames, Jack Hartley, Angi Poulos and J. C. Nugent, who is concluding an honorable stage career by giving imitations of a snapping turtle.

The late A. Lawrence Weber's good looking and personable son, Lawrence Weber, plays an innocent from Ashtabula as though he might be an innocent from Ashtabula, which is a good trick for a first performance.

William Harrigan does a barking managing editor with bark, and John Kirk is a nice old artist boss.

Last night's audience seemed to know what to expect of an Olsen, Johnson and Johnstone farce, and not to care. It was both friendly and forgiving.

William B. Friedlander staged the farce and helped with the songs.

Reprinted from
NEW YORK TIMES
June 4, 1941

'Snookie' That's All

By BROOKS ATKINSON

WHY did Olsen and Johnson leave town? Can't say positively. But a farce carelessly dubbed "Snookie" opened at the John Golden last evening, and that lamentable episode may throw some light on the mystery. When the proofs of the program were rushed to the newspaper offices two days ago, Olsen and Johnson appeared in neat type as the producers. But when the programs were distributed in the theatre last evening the names of Olsen and Johnson had silently vanished, leaving "Snookie" without visible sponsors. The said gentlemen might have done a neater disappearing act if they had remembered to remove their names also from page eight, where the attractions of "New York's Leading Theatres" are neatly listed. As Hawkshaw at the adjoining desk has just remarked: "That's the tipoff. Those guys are on the lam."

* * *

They better be. If they want to keep their health, they better stay away until this thing blows over. For "Snookie" is one of the most dismal bits of hocus-pocus to take up housekeeping on Broadway for some time. Although the producers have removed their names from the program the author has courageously left his in legible type. He is Thomas A. Johnstone, favorably known in cultivated circles as composer of "I'll Say She Is," the merry-go-round that made the Four Marx Brothers famous seventeen years ago.

Just now he is making bedlam out of the comic strip art department of a New York newspaper where the artists devote their attention to vertigo. "Snookie" has enough plot to choke the Empire State Building. It is further afflicted with song numbers and tap-dancing. If it were acted exclusively by low comedians, it might not be quite so appalling, but it could never be "Snookiezahellin."

Olsen and Johnson: wherever you are, keep under cover!

"Snookie"

Reprinted from NEW YORK WORLD-TELEGRAM, *June 4, 1941*

Snookie, Johnstone's Play Opens at Golden Theater

By SIDNEY B. WHIPPLE

INASMUCH as Snookie, a play by Thomas A. Johnstone, which opened last night at the John Golden Theater, hits an ultimate low in adult entertainment, and since it decidedly is not suitable for clean-minded youth, there would be little profit to anybody in dwelling at length upon its puerile indecencies. For the record, it is the most embarrassing play of the season.

The scene of Mr. Johnstone's egregious imaginings is a "comic art department" of a newspaper, as conceived by one who apparently never saw the inside of a newspaper shop. And the plot sounded suspiciously, at times, like one conceived by a man who had never seen the inside of a theater, either.

The men who draw the comic strips for our dailies, according to Mr. Johnstone's peculiar understanding, inhabit their own verminous quarters in the newspaper plant and amuse themselves all day by playing the piano, organizing bazooka bands, dealing hands of rummy, watching distant hotel windows through binoculars, wearing masquerade costumes, insulting managing editors, petting office girls, entertaining dancers who arrive on scooters and playing practical jokes on visitors who are so unfortunate as to wander into their den.

In order to ward off the evil day when they will be thrown out of this happy environment by a sensible managing editor they enter into a conspiracy to provide the widow of the publisher with an heir, thus checkmating the managing editor who otherwise would have inherited the property. As to the details of the conspiracy, decency compels reticence.

The play was badly directed and acted except in the instance of the veteran J. C. Nugent, who provided two minutes or more of clean, and clear humor in the role of a dyspetic lawyer.

According to the advance notices, this play was to be produced by Olsen and Johnson, the merry wags of Hellzapoppin. Last night's program, however, listed nobody as producer. I think Ole and Chic must have seen a preview.

Reprinted from
NEW YORK NEWSPAPER "PM"
June 4, 1941

Say Bye Bye To 'Snookie'

By LOUIS KRONENBERGER

SCHOOL is out. After *Snookie*, there will be no new shows on Broadway until September. After *Snookie*, as a matter of fact, it would not surprise me if there were no new shows at all. The theater cannot sustain many such blows, and neither can the theatergoer. The title, it is true, gives you a hint what is in store for you—but only a hint. Perhaps it's more of a giveaway that, although Olsen and Johnson were reported to be producing *Snookie*, neither they nor any one else owns up to the crime in the program.

Snookie takes place in the comic art department of a New York newspaper called the *Press*. The cartoonists on the *Press* are a collection of cards who go in for playing loud musical instruments, pinning signs on peoples' backs, arranging practical jokes and telling dirty ones. The whole thing is a sort of The Rover Boys on a Dungheap, with a few bows to *Hellzapoppin*. It's all in monumental bad taste.

The Big Situation—which is too complicated to explain briefly and too awful to explain at length—involves a test-tube baby. Such a matter is meat and drink to the jesters of the comic art department, who smirk away at it for three whole acts, only interrupting themselves to indulge in several lesser conceits, or—with the aid of a character called Stupid Stella, who goes about on a scooter—to do some singing and dancing.

A reputable cast, which included J. C. Nugent, Eddie Nugent, Julie Stevens and William Harrigan, did what they could, which—frankly—was very little.

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"The Happy Days"

Reprinted from NEW YORK POST, *May 14, 1941*

Diana Barrymore Seen In "The Happy Days"

By JOHN MASON BROWN

AS ONE of the more philosophical youngsters involved in "The Happy Days" gravely remarks, nothing is more important than to learn to forget unimportant things. The point is so well taken in the case of this adaptation Claude-Andre Puget's "Les Jours Heureux" that it might well be used at the Henry Miller as a motto, if not as an epitaph.

Miss Akins, who has not been represented in the local theatre since "O Evening Star" of seven years back, has never worked on a more trivial script. This time she has strayed from the hot houses in which her orchidaceous comedies have bloomed. Her dialogue for at least three-fourths of the evening is as plushless as an ottoman that is being recovered.

Traces of the old Miss Akins creep in. Such lines as the one that asks where the tears go one has not shed, or as that other one which tells how trees, if told of the uses to which they will be put, might regret the woodchopper's coming, faintly suggest the Miss Akins of "Thou Desperate Pilot" and "Follow the Furies."

But youth, not champagne, ermine, scented cigarettes, and the Hapsburgs, is now Miss Akins' concern—bright youth and puppy love. Miss Akins has merely shifted the locale. What originally occurred in France now takes place in the living room of a house on the St. Lawrence. C'est la guerre! Somehow one wishes Miss Akins' magic carpet had been more magical or less so. A major disadvantage of a translation is that one understands every word that is being said.

Praising Cicero

A great deal is said in the course of "The Happy Days." At any rate a great deal seems to be being said. The youngsters who have the stage to themselves are a garrulous lot. They prattle on and on and on, even when what they have to say is hard to listen to. Two of the girls invent an aviator in order to make one of the boys jealous. And, lo and behold, an aviator does appear, causing all the young ladies to go into tailspins. That is all there is to "The Happy Days," except its dullness.

Raymond Sovey's setting is designed with as much conviction as if it were executed for an interesting play. Diana Barrymore, Barbara Kent, and Joan Tetzel do all that doubtless can be done as the lovesick maidens. Frederick Bradlee unquestionably makes the worldly-wise snip as obnoxious as the text demands. Peter Scott is quite amusing as a slow-witted swain. And Edward Ashley plays the aviator so that his constantly stressed fascination is not curdling.

The evening, however, makes one wonder if youth can really be the hope of the future. These empty little egotists, with their incessant chit-chat about nothing, are enough to gray the most unsilvered head or to cause those who are gray to feel older than Gladstone. Miss Akins deserves thanks in at least one respect. Some of us having survived her dramatization will discover not only a new consolation but a greater truth in "De Senectute."

Reprinted from NEW YORK HERALD TRIBUNE, *May 14, 1941*

Youth

By RICHARD WATTS, JR.

THERE is a lot of youth strewn about the stage in the new play called "The Happy Days," thereby bringing that hitherto commendable institution into considerable disrepute. It is youth being coy and tremulous, youth being antic and lovelorn and wistful, and, to tell you the truth, youth being one of the most unutterable bores that the theater has shown us all season. Here it is, all wide-eyed and eager, in a little comedy that the rather fancy Miss Zoe Akins has adapted from the French of Claude-Andre Puget, showing us how some cute young people of approximately both sexes behave amid the stirrings of sex on an island in the St. Lawrence. With some young actresses of talent and some young actors of perhaps fewer gifts hard at work in it, "The Happy Days" brings the season to a close amid great lack of excitement.

• • •

It seems that two sisters named Francine and Marianne and a brother named Bernard and another brother and sister named Oliver and Pernette were left alone on an island when their parents, lucky folks, went off to a funeral, and it developed that Marianne loved Oliver and Bernard had a crush on Pernette and they were all pretty unpleasant to each other and Marianne and Pernette invented an aviator lover to make Oliver jealous and at that point a real aviator came in, having crashed in the vicinity. Thereupon hopeful people here and there in the theater hoped that he would turn out to be a bigshot Nazi, but he was only a fellow named Michael and all the girls fell in love with him. Then one of the girls tried to commit suicide and two of the boys put on funny hats and there was a great deal of whimsical talk.

• • •

Meanwhile a nice young actress named Joan Tetzel was giving an attractive and honest performance as the most wistful of the girls, and Miss Diana Barrymore, in her second role of the season, was playing with pleasant forthrightness a more determined heroine. Miss Barbara Kent was quietly effective as the most mature of the lot. Peter Scott was not too annoying as one of the boys and Edward Ashley, as the dashing aviator, was inoffensive, which is no small tribute to him. That seems to leave Frederick Bradlee as, next to Miss Akins and Claude-Andre Puget, the person involved in the proceedings who gave me the least happiness. Anyway, "The Happy Days" will perhaps have a valuable effect upon my life. It has persuaded me that youth perhaps isn't as admirable a quality as I had thought it was.

Reprinted from NEW YORK WORLD-TELEGRAM, *May 14, 1941*

Diana Barrymore in Play Adapted by Zoe Akins

By SIDNEY B. WHIPPLE

A TROUPE of misguided youngsters, including John Barrymore's colorful young daughter, Diana, appeared last night at Henry Miller's theater in a sickly parade of adolescent silliness called The Happy Days and adapted, I was shocked to learn, by Zoe Akins, from a play originally written by one Claude Andre Puget.

It is almost impossible to retail Mr. Puget's story, partly because it is so wispy in the first place and partly because whatever delicacy of beauty it may have had originally is now completely overwhelmed by childish direction and infantile acting. I have a notion that it concerns the budding of love in three simple-minded maidens who were unwisely left to their own devices when their parents were called away from their lovely home in the Thousand Islands to enjoy a funeral somewhere near Quebec.

With little to occupy their bird-like minds the three girls fall upon a pair of nauseating youths who happen to be around, plus an older but rather stuffy aviator who drops in, unhappy wight, all unconscious that he is falling into a nest of amorous tom-tits. The gentleman escapes with his honor intact, but only after the more romantic of the little girls has attempted to commit suicide and thus brought her companions around to sanity or a reasonable facsimile therof.

It is probaly not Miss Barrymore's fault that all this should be such a waste of time. I do not believe her distinguished auntie, even in her own youth, could have done anything with such a play. But in all frankness I must add that as of this date Diana has not yet proved any right to try on her father's cast-off coronet.

I am more sympathetically inclined toward Joan Tetzel, who was comparatively sweet and unaffected as the romantically suicidal girl, and who must have worked hard to overcome the terrible handicap of Arthur Ripley's impossible direction. Miss Tetzel has promise.

Frederick Bradlee, so the playbill relates, "has much in common with the character he portrays." If this is true (and from his acting I have no cause to believe otherwise) then all I can say is God help him. Peter Scott gave an even worse performance, if such a thing were possible, as a character whose mentality needed considerable strengthening to bring it up to the standard half-wit size.

Raymond Sovey's setting, the interior of a comfortable mansion somewhere in the St. Lawrence region, was beautiful and deserves better ownership. Raphael and Robert Hakim boldly admit responsibility for the play.

"The Happy Days"

Reprinted from NEW YORK DAILY NEWS, *May 14, 1941*

"The Happy Days" Ends Theatre Season At Henry Miller's

"The Happy Days," comedy adapted by Zoe Akins from the French of Claude-Andre Puget. Produced by Raphael and Robert Hakim at Henry Miller's Theatre, New York, Tuesday, May 13, 1941.

★ ★

By BURNS MANTLE

IN ONE way Zoe Akins, whose new comedy, "The Happy Days," was produced at Henry Miller's Theatre last night, is a fortunate playwright: Her play is that type of playful comedy that frequently charms a barn theatre crowd in July or August and leads to great expectations for the Fall.

Now, I think, she must know that it cannot be considered a major prospect for Broadway competition. Thus she will be saved weeks of anticipatory dreaming and planning, and escape a greater disappointment in the end.

Miss Akins found "The Happy Days" in a French script written by Claude-Andre Puget and played successfully in that dear Paris that used to be.

It is a simple tale of adolescence which she has transferred to an island in the St. Lawrence. In the reading I daresay it is amusing. The reader is privileged to fill in his own characters.

In the playing it is definitely a conscious effort. The young players are conscious of their youth, and try to capitalize it; the author is conscious of the instability of her actors, and tries to protect them; the director is conscious of the comedy's juvenility and tries to overcome it.

Disappointment

Finally, the audience is conscious of the artificiality of the whole business and is unable to accept it as anything but obvious make-believe spotted with incidental scenes of fleeting appeal.

A quintet of youngsters left on an island are suffering the irritation of puppy love. They have spent their summers together for years, and have long thought that way about each other.

Now they begin to wonder. Marianne, to test Oliver, imagines herself a handsome lover—an aviator she met in Quebec.

Just as she finishes describing him there he stands in the doorway. He is Michael. He is an aviator forced down by engine trouble. He is handsome. He might be romantic and glamorous. Not only Marianne but all her female companions are fascinated.

Out of which coincidence, helped by the disgust of the boys, grow situations mildly amusing but never convincing.

The author of "Declasse," "The Greeks Had a Word for It" and "The Old Maid" has done and can do a lot better than this.

Youthful Cast

The young actors show promise, but have been badly directed. Diana Barrymore again reveals the poise and the simple, direct approach that will one day help her a lot. Frederick Bradlee indicates gifts that will help his stage future once they let him play something besides youthful prigs.

Joan Tetzel is still pretty young, but eager and gifted. Peter Scott has, with help, the makings of a comedian. Barbara Kent is a well schooled ingenue. Edward Ashley, playing Michael, is probably a better actor than he has a chance to prove.

The Raymond Sovey setting is pleasant. The producers are Raphael and Robert Hakim, French cinematicians.

"THE HAPPY DAYS"

A play by Claude-Andre Puget, adapted by Zoe Akins; staged by Arthur Ripley; setting by Raymond Sovey; production supervised by Raphael Hakim; presented at Henry Miller's Theater on May 13, 1941, by Raphael and Robert Hakim. The cast:

Francine	Barbara Kent
Marianne	Diana Barrymore
Oliver	Frederick Bradlee
Pernette	Joan Tetzel
Bernard	Peter Scott
Michael	Edward Ashley

Reprinted from NEW YORK TIMES, *May 14, 1941*

'The Happy Days,' Adapted by Zoe Akins from the French

By BROOKS ATKINSON

AFTER an extensive career in Europe before Blitzkrieg and surrender, Claude-André Puget's "The Happy Days" has found its way to Broadway. It was acted at Henry Miller's last evening in an excellent adaptation by Zoe Akins. To avoid rueful political considerations, Miss Akins has transferred Mr. Puget's story of puppy love to an island in the St. Lawrence River, where characters with French names are French Canadians.

For "The Happy Days" is a comic and touching story of adolescent boys and girls whose emotional life is unstable. As a playwright Mr. Puget is a little too facile to tell the full truth bluntly. But he has written this fable with disarming sympathy for the pangs of adolescence, and he has not forgotten that it also sounds ridiculous to adult ears. It is well acted, particularly by Diana Barrymore and Joan Tetzel, who match the torment of girlish love with their vibrant and stormy playing. "The Happy Days" is the pleasantest news to come out of France for quite a weary time.

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When the play opens, five boys and girls, all members of two families, are quibbling and teasing by themselves in an island home while their parents are away. They are decent young people and all friends. Bernard, a crumpled lad, loves Pernette, an innocent maiden, who is not sure that she even likes him. Marianne, an intense maiden, is desperately in love with Oliver, a superior young man who enjoys torturing her. Left to themselves, these boys and girls live a bickering though affectionate life of their own. But a romantic aviator happens in at the close of the first act, and everything is different from that moment. For Pernette and Marianne throw themselves at him shamelessly and come as close to tragedy as the author of a comedy dares let them go.

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As a matter of fact, the author is a little too full of dramatic guile to let the characters tell their own stories fully. "The Happy Days" is plot comedy in which the dramatic pattern triumphs. Although this department is not acquainted with the original text, it suspects that Miss Akins's kindly adaptation may have given the play a tender sincerity out of her own regard for people. For when these two girls open their hearts they occasionally speak pure poetry. They are very sweet children.

And they are lucky to be acted by Miss Barrymore and Miss Tetzel, both of whom are interested in character and both of whom are actresses. Miss Tetzel's tremulous half-frightened eagerness is girlish and poignant at the same time and results in a fully rounded character. And in her second appearance on Broadway, Miss Barrymore plunges headlong into the business of acting a part with passion and insight. Some of their scenes together are exceptionally well acted with a vivid sense of the burning life of two girls.

As the crumpled lad who sleeps in a sweater which makes him perspire, which in turn makes him smell, Peter Scott is highly amusing. Frederick Bradlee plays the part of a supercilious college snob without almost too much veracity. The romantic aviator who is dashed by the rumpus his presence causes is played tactfully by Edward Ashley. Barbara Kent plays the passive part of a slightly older sister with attractive authority. What with one thing and another, "The Happy Days" provides a pleasant, animated evening at the tag end of the season.